

## What woodworking and the Web have in common

*by Timothy Anderl, AFRL Headquarters*

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AFB, OHIO --- With a little foresight and imagination, CMSgt. Barbara Nie hatches a plan to turn something most of us would ignore into something useful. She says that though woodworking can be frustrating — after all if you mess up or miscalculate you have to strip the wood and start all over — with a little patience an ordinary log could become a beautiful table or chair that is suitable for daily use.

It is this same critical thinking and foresight that landed Nie at AFRL after almost 21 years with the Air Force. Nie has served at Luke, Langley, Randolph and Wright-Patterson Air Force Bases as well as time in South West Asia and Germany.

When Nie interviewed for her position in AFRL with Lt. Col. Larry Kosiba she admitted that she had been part of an Inspector General team sent to evaluate a few of AFRL's programs. Kosiba told Nie that her keen critical sense and ability to fix problems and make build better programs is what qualified her for her job at the lab.

Currently, Nie leads a team of web developers who are pioneering the Internet and intranet for the three-year-old Air Force Research Laboratory. Nie began her position of Superintendent of Corporate Communications at AFRL/XPTC in the end of Apr 1999.

"[Working on the web sites] is exciting and it's frustrating. It's exciting because we're in the first stages of the process — It's always great to be on the front end of things," Nie said. "It's frustrating because there aren't a lot of policies and procedures out there, so it's difficult to know if you are doing the right thing."

Coupled with the web savvy of her team, Nie is responsible for building and maintaining AFRL's web communications. When the team encounters a problem it is their differing perspectives on the project that make it possible to turn the problem into a success.

"Because I'm new to web design I ask a lot of questions that they haven't thought about because they've been doing it for so long," Nie said. "I come up with some fresh ideas. I also come up with some that are bogus and ask 'Can we do this' — and [the team] says, 'No Barb we can't do that'. They explain why and together we make a really good team."

Along with building the web efforts of AFRL, Nie has built a career and a family. In November, Nie was selected for a promotion to Chief Master Sergeant. Modestly, Nie says that it would've been impossible for her to imagine her accomplishments had it not been for encouragement from people involved with the Air Force, her mother and father, and husband who had certainty that she could do it all along.

Nie, originally from Chicago, Ill., lives in Dayton with her husband Jeff, who is also stationed at Wright-Patterson AFB, and three year old daughter, Brina. She enjoys doing things in her free time that involve her family. In addition to woodworking, Nie and her family enjoy visits to the park, picnicking, bike riding and gardening.

Building the community also occupies her free time. She has volunteered with Special Olympics, the Super Saturday program and the Salvation Army.

In the meantime, Nie said the lab and her team will keep her occupied with developing the Corporate Net and brainstorming the addition of video streaming to the AFRL Internet and intranet sites.

"Seeing the end product from what you've envisioned as the end product is what encourages my patience and willingness to continue with a project," Nie said about her woodworking. Nie's willingness to see a project through helps her to maintain the fervor that will make AFRL's web communications a success. @